

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05
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-----099785 041242Z /10
R 041010Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3880

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E. O. 11652: NA
TAGS: ELAB, RP
SUBJECT: THE TRADE UNIONS SUPPORT KBL - OR DO THEY?

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN ACCOUNT OF A KEY TRADE UNION CONVENTION IN RIZAL, METRO MANILA,. CONVENTION IS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE IT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED SUPPORT FOR STRAIGHT KBL TICKET WHILE ITS 360 DELEGATES WERE OVERWHELMINGLY ENTHUSIASTICALLY FOR THE OPPOSITION, FOR THE LABAN TICKET, SO MUCH SO THE OFFICERS, WHO WERE THEMSELVES IN FAVOR OF LABAN, DID NOT DARE MOVE A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE KBL. HERE IS A FIRST HAND OBSERVATION OF THE ENTHUSIASM THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES GENERATED EVEN IN THE FACE OF COMPETITION FROM THE KBL CANDIDATES WHO HAD EQUAL OPPORTUNITY. THE MOTIF OF THE LABAN CANDIDATES WAS RIDICULE OF "DICTATOR MARCOS AND HIS KBL TICKET," AND DENUNCIATION OF MARTIAL LAW. LABAN CANDIDATES ARE NOT DISTURBED BY THE "ALIEN INTERVENTION" CHARGES. END SUMMARY.

2. LABATT ATTENDED THE 15TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE FEDERATION OF UNIONS IN RIZAL (FUR) ON SUNDAY APRIL 2. UNLIKE LAST YEAR, IN FRONT OF THE BUILDING IN WHICH THE CONVENTION WAS HELD, THE MAX RESTAURANT ON ROXAS BLVD., WAS ADORNED WITH A FIVE FOOT BY 20 FOOT SIGN ANNOUNCING TO ALL OBSERVERS THAT "FUR SUPPORTS VOTING STRAIGHT
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KBL."

3. UPON ENTERING THE MEETING ROOM, SECRETARY FOR INDUSTRY VINCENTE PATERNO WAS ADDRESSING THE LACK-LUSTER DELEGATES IN TAGALOG. AFTER POLITE APPLAUSE PATERNO DEPARTED. LABATT WAS INTRODUCED AND USHERED TO A SEAT AT THE HEAD TABLE. A FEW MOMENTS LATER A

MAN WHO TURNED OUT TO BE LABAN CANDIDATE TEOFISTO (TITO) GUINGONA WAS SHOWN TO THE SEAT ALONGSIDE. AT THE TIME LABOR UNDERSECRETARY INCIONG WAS DELIVERING A ONE HOUR LONG HARANGUING SPEECH ABOUT THE VIRTUES OF THE LABOR CODE, THE BENEFITS GAINED UNDER MARTIAL LAW, THE WISDOM OF RESTRUCTURING OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND CRITICIZING THE LABAN CANDIDATES FOR BEING OPPOSITION FOR THE SAKE OF OPPOSITION. INCIONG, A FIERY SPEAKER, WAS INTERRUPTED A FEW TIMES WITH APPLAUSE. HE HAD WORKED SO HARD GESTICULATING AND THE 360 DELEGATES HAD EARLIER SO OVERWHELMED THE INADEQUATE AIR CONDITIONING THAT INCIONG WAS SOAKED IN HIS OWN PERSPIRATION WHEN HE SAT DOWN.

4. WHILE THE TUCP PRESIDENT KITO MENDOZA WAS SPEAKING, LABATT ASKED GUINGONA IF SITTING NEXT TO AN AMERICAN POSED ANY PROBLEM FOR HIM. GUINGONA SAID, "NO AT ALL. AS A MATTER OF FACT THE KBL ATTACK ON OUR ALLEGED ASSOCIATION WITH ALIENS IS BECOMING AN ASSET--PEOPLE JUST DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE DONE ANYTHING WRONG."

5. WHILE ONE OF THE OFFICERS WAS ADDRESSING THE DELEGATES, HE WALKED LABAN CANDIDATE ERNESTO MACEDA WITH FOUR CAMPAIGN WORKERS WEARING HIS NAME AND GIVING OUT HIS LITERATURE. WHEN SOMEONE SHOUTED, "MACEDA - LABAN" PANDAMONIUM BROKE OUT. THE DELEGATES SHOUTED, "LABAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LABAN", APPLAUDED, AND HOLLERED TAGALOG SLOGANS, WHILE MACEDA CALMLY WENT THROUGH THE DELEGATES SHAKING THEIR HANDS. THE SON OF GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE UNION THEN WENT TO THE MICROPHONE AND INTRODUCED "TITO" GUINGONA AND AGAIN THE DELEGATES WENT WILD, SHOUTING, "LABAN, LABAN."

6. GUINGONA, A MILD MANNERED MAN SPOKE IN TAGALOG ABOUT 20 MINUTES, CALM, COOL, AND COLLECTED. HE HAD THE DELEGATES IN NEAR HYSTERIA WITH LAUGHTER AT THE TAGALOG RIDICULE HE WAS HEAPING ON MARCOS AND THE KBL. AT ONE POINT, HE SAID IN ENGLISH, "DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE DICTATOR MEANS BY PEACE AND ORDER? HE MEANS, I WANT A PIECE OF THAT COMPANY, A PIECE OF THAT INDUSTRY A PIECE OF YOUR BUSINESS AND THAT'S AN ORDER." AGAIN

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THE DELEGATES WERE LAUGHING AND APPLAUDING WITH GREAT GUSTO. GUINGONA RESUMED HIS SEAT, STILL CALM AND COOL, ALONGSIDE LABATT. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, HE SAID, "THAT'S THE WAY IT IS WHEREEVER WE GO" AND "I GO TO TEN RALLIES EVERY NIGHT." WELL WHAT ABOUT THE "SUPPORT KBL" SIGN AND THE MIMEOGRAPHED RESOLUTION LYING ON THE TABLE BEFORE US? HE SAID "IT MEANS NOTHING; IF NINOY (AQUINO) WERE OUT OF JAIL WE WOULD REALLY SHOW THEM."

7. AFTER THE FUR DELEGATES HAD LISTENED TO KBL CANDIDATES ABELLO AND BENITEZ AND PATERNO AND LABAN CANDIDATES GONZALES, GUINGONA AND MACEDA, THE UNION OFFICERS WERE AFRAID TO PRESENT THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING SUPPORT FOR KBL.

8. THE NEXT DAY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNION TOLD LABATT, "WE KNOW OUR MEMBERS ARE PRO-LABAN, BUT IF WE DON'T MAKE SOME PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT IN FAVOR OF KBL WE WILL LOSE ALL OUR CASES BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR." THE SECRETARY GENERAL ALSO REVEALED THAT BOBBY OCA WAS NOT INVITED TO SPEAK TO THE DELEGATES BECAUSE "HE IS A SMALL BOY." WILL FUR MEMBERS SUPPORT ANY KBL CANDIDATES? "YES, BUT ONLY THE FIRST LADY AND BLAS OPLE. WE ARE SENDING OUR UNION JEEP TO BULACAN
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TO HELP OPLE GET THE LARGESY VOTE IN REGION III." "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE KBL ATTACK ON LABAN FOR ALIEN INTERFERENCE" LABATT ASKED. "THE PEOPLE THINK IT'S NONSENSE", WAS THE RESPONSE. "BEFORE MARTIAL LAW, A CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS HAD TO BE PRO-AMERICAN TO HAVE ANY CHANCE." "DOES THAT INCLUDE MARCOS?" "THAT INCLUDES MARCOS."

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